



NRC NEWS

U. S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC DISPATCHES STAFF IN PREPARATION FOR HURRICANE IVAN

Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff have been dispatched to two nuclear plants and two emergency response centers in preparation for Hurricane Ivan.

The NRC has staffed its Incident Response Center to monitor and assist Louisiana's River Bend and Waterford nuclear plants, and any other plant that may be impacted by the hurricane. Personnel have already been dispatched to the plants, to augment NRC's resident inspectors permanently assigned to those sites. Staff also have been sent to the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Regional Operations Center in Denton, Texas, and to Louisiana's Emergency Operations Center in Baton Rouge.

"In accordance with NRC requirements, Louisiana's nuclear plants have made the necessary preparations for Hurricane Ivan and we have pre-positioned our people to monitor events and respond, if needed," said Bruce S. Mallett, administrator of NRC's Region IV office in Arlington, Texas.

At this time, the NRC's primary focus is on Waterford, 20 miles west of New Orleans. The plant declared a Notice of Unusual Event, the lowest of NRC's emergency classifications, after the National Weather Service issued a hurricane warning for St. Charles Parish, La., at 4 p.m. on Sept. 14. The plant is operating at full power, but its procedures require that it begin shutting down 12 hours prior to any predicted hurricane force winds on site. The plant has emergency diesel generators available if needed and has additional diesel generators, normally used in routine operations, and emergency battery power available should the need arise.

Waterford is situated some 14 to 17 feet above sea level, and has flood protection above the predicted storm surge. Key components also are housed in watertight buildings capable of withstanding hurricane force winds and flooding.

Mallett said the regional office in Arlington will maintain close contact with the agency's headquarters in Rockville, Md., and its staff at Louisiana's nuclear plants until the hurricane threat has passed.

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